

2004 King County Comprehensive Plan Update

Area Zoning Study

Department of Development and Environmental Services

Study Area: Sammamish Agricultural Production District – Northeast Area

Summary

This is an area of approximately 29 acres located in the Sammamish Agricultural Production District (Sammamish APD). The area is designated Rural Residential on the King County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. The zoning for the area is RA-2.5-SO, Rural Residential – one home per 2.5 acres within a Special District Overlay (SO). The area is within the Significant Trees SO and the Agricultural Buffer SO.

The purpose of this area zoning study is to review those properties within the northeast portion Sammamish APD that are currently zoned for Rural Residential use to determine whether or not the Rural Residential properties should remain within the APD.

Maps and a parcel-by-parcel list showing proposed amendments are attached.

Background

This subarea plan was carried out to determine the most appropriate land use designation and zoning for those properties zoned RA-2.5-SO within the Sammamish APD, as authorized by King County Council Motion 11697. Subsequent 2003 docket requests from private landowners in the study area requested that the properties be redesignated Urban and become part of the City of Woodinville's PAA, which borders the study area to the north.

Property owners within the study area pursued a site-specific land use redesignation, requesting an Urban designation. The King County Hearing Examiner conducted a hearing on this matter in December, 2003 and recommended denial. DDES also recommended denial of this proposal. Staff reports from the Hearing Examiner and DDES are included in the transmittal package for the Executive's Recommended 2004 Update of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

The study area includes 12 ½ parcels plus two roads and associated rights-of-way. The two northernmost parcels are not within the boundaries of the APD, and the boundary cuts across the parcel south of those ones. The northernmost parcel is also not included within the Agricultural Production Buffer SO. The ½ parcel is located at the southwest edge of the study area. It is a split zone parcel designated for Agriculture on the KCCP Land Use Map, with A-10-SO zoning on the western half.

Over half of the parcels are currently vacant. Uses on the others include single family homes, a church, a daycare/education center, and a small telephone utility equipment building. King County owns 2-1/2 vacant parcels in the study area. The other major owner in the area is the Woodinville Alliance Church, with an existing church on a large parcel and two adjacent vacant parcels.

Applicable King County Comprehensive Plan Policies:

R- 537 All parcels within the boundaries of an APD should be zoned Agricultural, either A-10 or A-35. If small parcels in the APD are not zoned for Agriculture, permitted nonresidential uses must not conflict with agricultural uses in the APD.

R-547 Lands can be removed from the Agricultural Production Districts, except as provided in Policy 547a, only when it can be demonstrated that:

- a. Removal of the land will not diminish the productivity of prime agricultural soils or the effectiveness of farming within the local APD boundaries; and
- b. The land is determined to be no longer suitable for agricultural purposes.

In addition to meeting these two tests, removal of the land from the APD may only occur if it is mitigated through the addition of agricultural land abutting the same APD of equal acreage and of equal or greater soils and agriculture value.

R- 103 King County's Rural Area is considered to be permanent and shall not be redesignated to an Urban Growth Area until reviewed pursuant to the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.130(3) and Countywide Planning Policy FW-1.

Analysis:

Recently, King County and the cities within the county completed a detailed assessment of the development capacity within our Urban Growth Area, as envisioned by the Growth Management Act and the Countywide Planning Policies. This assessment, known as the "Buildable Lands Report," indicates there is sufficient development capacity within our Urban Growth Area to accommodate forecast growth for at least the next 10 years.

While outside the scope of this area zoning study, conversion of Rural-zoned land within the APD to Urban is inconsistent with KCCP policies and would bring severe development pressure to bear on other property within and adjacent to the APD.

King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) policy R-537 calls for areas within an APD to be zoned for Agricultural use, either A-10 or A-35. However, this policy acknowledges that there may be small parcels located within an APD that are not zoned for Agricultural use, so long as permitted uses on these parcels do not conflict with agriculture.

Removal of land from the APD is not consistent with the existing KCCP Policy R-547. No finding has been made that the land is not suitable for agriculture and no replacement land has been identified for the area proposed for removal from the APD.

Conclusions:

Removal of land from the Sammamish APD is not consistent with KCCP Policy R-547. It has not been demonstrated that removal of this study area from the APD will not diminish the productivity of prime agricultural soils or the effectiveness of farming within this APD. There has also been no finding that the land is not suitable for agriculture. No replacement land has been identified for the area under consideration for removal from the APD.

KCCP Policy R-537 acknowledges the presence of Rural Residential parcels in the APD. This policy does not require removal of rural-zoned properties from the APD. Policy R-537 calls for permitted nonresidential uses on these properties within the APD to not conflict with agriculture. Existing uses in the study area are not in conflict with nearby agricultural uses.

Executive Staff Recommendation:

No change recommended. Retain the existing APD boundaries, land use designations and zoning for the entire study area.